

Newfoundland Traditional Song:
The Legacy from the English West Country

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Abstract: Writing about the history of Newfoundland popular song before the twentieth century is difficult because of the paucity of primary sources. Little song collecting appears to have taken place there before the 1920s. Focusing on the legacy from Victorian England, this paper examines traditional song as an aspect of the cultural connection between Newfoundland and the four counties of the English West Country. It offers a methodology for determining which songs were likely to have been sung in Newfoundland outports during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Were the same songs sung in the outports of Victorian Newfoundland as in the villages and small towns of Victorian England? On the surface, that question is difficult to answer with any degree of certainty. The problem is an apparent lack of reliable evidence with which to verify such hunches. Outside of the city of St. John's, nineteenth-century Newfoundland suffered from poor, sometimes non-existent, internal communications, and the population was dispersed among a large number of isolated and usually tiny outports. Because of this high degree of geographical decentralization, direct evidence on Newfoundland song before the 1920s is scarce. Potential sources such as diaries, letters and even newspapers may eventually provide some of the needed clues, but in the meantime we have to look elsewhere. The aim of this article is to consider various *indirect* sources that, taken together, provide at least circumstantial evidence of the kinds of English songs likely to have been heard in certain Newfoundland coastal communities during the last decades of the Victorian era.

Prima facie, Paul Mercer's bibliographical compilation, *Newfoundland Songs and Ballads in Print, 1842-1974*, is the obvious place to look for information on nineteenth-century Newfoundland song.¹ This gives us some information on the titles of song-texts published in St. John's during the latter part of the century. Unfortunately, the dates included in Mercer's title are somewhat deceptive. An examination of the volume's contents quickly reveals that very few of the listed items pre-date 1894, the presumed publication date of the earliest songster recovered by Mercer, namely *The St. John's Advertiser and Fishermen's Guide: A Racy Little Song and Joke Book*. This was an anonymous booklet usually ascribed to John Burke,² and it comprised only a few recently penned items. Rather more useful are two songbooks that appeared at the turn of the century: a small book which Burke co-edited with George T. Oliver, titled *The People's Songster: Containing Some of the Most Recent Songs of the Day*,³ and a songster issued by Burke's main rival as a song-writer and song-editor, James Murphy, *Songs and Ballads of Newfoundland, Ancient and Modern*.⁴

The contents of these songsters, plus the very few other nineteenth-century items noted by Mercer, demonstrate that during the second half of the Victorian era, some of the inhabitants of St. John's were familiar with a small body of home-grown songs that were unlikely to have been sung anywhere but in the colony itself or perhaps on board vessels manned by Newfoundlanders. While many of the songs printed by Burke and Murphy were humorous ditties on topical subjects or rather nondescript drawing room ballads, others were nationalist in nature, ranging from the overtly political to the sentimentally

¹ Paul Mercer, *Newfoundland Songs and Ballads in Print, 1842-1974: A Title and First-Line Index* (St. John's, Nfld: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979).

² [John Burke, ed.,] *The St. John's Advertiser and Fishermen's Guide: A Racy Little Song and Joke Book* (St. John's: The Prescott Street Auction Mart, 1894).

³ John Burke & George T. Oliver, eds., *The People's Songster, Buyers Guide, and Gems of Poetry and Prose, Containing Some of the most Recent Songs of the Day*. [St. John's, Nfld.]: (Oliver & Burke, 190)0.

⁴ James Murphy, ed., *Songs and Ballads of Newfoundland, Ancient and Modern*. (St. John's, Nfld: [James Murphy], 1902).

patriotic. An example of the former is the "Anti-Confederation Song," which included the famous stanza:

Hurrah for our own native isle, Newfoundland,
Not a stranger shall hold one inch of its strand,
Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf,
Come near at your peril, Canadian wolf.⁵

Mark Walker's "The 'Antis' of Plate Cove" (a celebration of the rejection of Confederation by Newfoundland) is another example of a political song.⁶ In addition, towards the turn of the century, two of the most beautiful patriotic paeans to the island were penned: Sir Cavendish Boyle's "Ode to Newfoundland"⁷ and "The Flag of Newfoundland," attributed to Archbishop Howley and Sister Josephine.⁸ However, it is questionable whether any of these nationalist songs were popular or well known outside St. John's. Perhaps surprisingly, they were not found in oral tradition in any of the outports visited by the first folklorists to collect songs in rural Newfoundland. The leads provided by Mercer do tell us something about the songs heard in St. John's right at the end of the Victorian era; but in other respects, Mercer turns out to be a blind alley. A different method of inquiry is therefore required.

The essence of the problem is this: although vernacular song collecting in England and Scotland goes back to at least the eighteenth century, it does not appear to have taken place to any great extent in Newfoundland before the interwar period. James Murphy is perhaps the one exception, although his collecting from oral tradition was not extensive. However, it is clear that his work during the early 1900s deserves greater scrutiny, since he apparently did gather a few song-texts from informants in the outports, although unfortunately no tunes. Murphy aside, we have to make use of information gathered two decades after the end of the Victorian period, and we must therefore assess how legitimate it is to extrapolate back from this data to the nineteenth century. The first question is: what pertinent information do we have?

The first wave of folksong collecting in Newfoundland took place between 1920 and 1930 and was primarily the work of three individuals: Elisabeth Bristol (Greenleaf), Maud Karpeles, and Gerald S. Doyle. Bristol was an American, an education student at Vassar College, who spent two summers as a member of the Grenfell Mission, teaching in the western Newfoundland outport of Sally's Cove. While there, she visited a few of the neighbouring communities on the shores of Bonne Bay, including Rocky Harbour, and collected some of the local songs. By 1929, she had married, and after changing her name to Elisabeth Greenleaf, she returned to Newfoundland with the express purpose of collecting more folksongs. Accompanied by Vassar music student Grace Yarrow, whose job was to note the tunes, she traveled by coastal steamer from St. John's to Flower's Cove on the Northern Peninsula.⁹ The two women collected songs from sailors and passengers on the mail boats and in various outports on the way, including Fogo, Twillingate, Fortune Harbour, La Scie, Fleur de Lys, and Sandy Cove.¹⁰ The fruits of their efforts were published in 1933 as *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*.¹¹ The book contains 185 songs plus some dance tunes.

Gerald S. Doyle was a Catholic Newfoundlander of Irish extraction, who hailed from the predominantly Anglo-Scottish and Protestant community of King's Cove. His compilation, *The Old Time*

⁵ Gerald S. Doyle, ed., *Old-Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland: Songs of the People from the Days of Our Forefathers*, 55. Fifth edition (St. John's, Nfld: Gerald S. Doyle Ltd, 1978).

⁶ Gerald S. Doyle, ed. *The Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*, unpaginated. (St. John's, Nfld: Gerald S. Doyle, 1927).

⁷ Doyle, *Old-Time Songs and Poetry*, 1978: 7.

⁸ Doyle, 1978: 8.

⁹ Yarrow also married soon after visiting Newfoundland, and subsequently used her married name, Mansfield.

¹⁰ The secondary literature on Greenleaf is sparse. For an account of the extant manuscript sources on her visits to Newfoundland, see E. David Gregory, "The Elisabeth Greenleaf Collection at MUNFLA: An Overview", *Canadian Folk Music/Bulletin de musique folklorique canadienne*, 37:3 (Fall 2003): 10-16.

¹¹ Elisabeth Greenleaf & Grace Mansfield, eds. *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1933).

Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland,¹² was initially published in 1927, although it would subsequently go through many editions. The first edition lacked tunes, and the contents drew heavily on the publications of Burke and Murphy; but the second, much larger edition published by Doyle in 1940 contained melodies for most items and a number of additional songs that Doyle had apparently collected himself.¹³ By then, of course, Doyle had access to the work of Greenleaf and Yarrow, and also to some of the songs noted by Karpeles.

Maud Karpeles' collecting in Newfoundland, which took place during field trips in the summers of 1929 and 1930, was more extensive than either Greenleaf's or Doyle's. She visited over forty outport communities, compared to Greenleaf's sixteen. Karpeles was an experienced British folklorist, the secretary, disciple, collaborator and "adopted daughter" of the prominent Edwardian collector Cecil Sharp.¹⁴ With Sharp, she had spent several summers during World War I collecting in the Southern Appalachians, and since Sharp's death she had trained herself to note melodies and to capture lyrics quickly in her idiosyncratic form of shorthand. In 1929, Karpeles focused on Trinity Bay, Bonavista Bay, the Bonavista Peninsula, Notre Dame Bay, and Conception Bay, visiting such outports and other communities as Fortune Harbour, King's Cove, Trinity, Harbour Grace, North River, Clarke's Beach, and Conception Harbour. In 1930, she returned to explore Placentia Bay, the Burin Peninsula, Fortune Bay, Hermitage Bay, and the Avalon Peninsula. On this occasion, the outports she visited included Ferryland, Trepassey, Riverhead, Placentia, Beaubois, Burin, Rencontre, Belleoram, and Hermitage.¹⁵ A small selection from the many songs and ballads collected by Karpeles was published in 1934 as *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*, with piano accompaniments by composer Ralph Vaughan Williams and others.¹⁶ Much later, in 1971, a more comprehensive selection was printed in a new volume with the same title,¹⁷ but some additional unpublished items may be found in the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore Archives.¹⁸

Combined, the results of Greenleaf's, Doyle's and Karpeles' collecting make a body of Newfoundland song comprising around four hundred different items. We have enough material to work with, but now we have to confront the second question: can we legitimately draw from this data any conclusions about nineteenth-century Newfoundland song? The short answer, I believe, is "yes." Much—although not all—of this material does in all probability date originally from the nineteenth century or earlier. There are two good reasons for making this assertion. The first is that most of the informants from whom the songs were collected were elderly, or, where they were younger, they often stated that they had learned the songs from their parents or grandparents. We know from the experience of many folksong collectors that elderly informants tend to best remember songs learned in childhood or young adulthood. One of Helen Creighton's most prolific informants, Angelo Dornan, is a case in point: he learned his entire repertoire of several hundred songs before moving to Alberta at the age of 19 but recalled them for Creighton after retiring back to New Brunswick more than four decades later.¹⁹ It is probable, therefore,

¹² Gerald S. Doyle, ed., *The Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*. (St. John's, Nfld: Gerald S. Doyle, 1927. Second edition, 1940. Third edition, 1955).

¹³ On Doyle, see Neil V. Rosenberg, "The Gerald S. Doyle Songsters and the Politics of Newfoundland Song", *Canadian Folklore canadien*, 13: 1 (1991): 45-57.

¹⁴ Sharp never formally adopted Maud Karpeles, but "adopted daughter" was the term they adopted to describe her relationship to him while collecting together in the Southern Appalachians, and Sharp continued to use it after their return to England. Karpeles' draft autobiography (a typed manuscript at Cecil Sharp House) makes it clear that she was comfortable with the term as a descriptor of their relationship.

¹⁵ For a critical perspective on Karpeles' field-work in Newfoundland, see Martin Lovelace, "Unnatural Selection: Maud Karpeles's Newfoundland field diaries", in *Folk Song: Tradition, Revival, and Re-Creation*, edited by Ian Russell & David Atkinson, 284-298. (Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, 2004). An alternative viewpoint is offered in E. David Gregory, "Maud Karpeles, Newfoundland, and the Crisis of the Folk Song Revival, 1924-1935", *Newfoundland Studies*, 16: 2 (Fall 2000), 151-165.

¹⁶ Maud Karpeles, ed., *Folk Songs from Newfoundland with pianoforte accompaniments*. (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1934).

¹⁷ Maud Karpeles, ed., *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*. (London: Faber, 1971. Reprinted: Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, n.d.).

¹⁸ MUNFLA (Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore Archives), *Karpeles Collection*. See especially folders 1-5 and the two field diaries.

¹⁹ Helen Creighton, ed., with musical transcriptions by Kenneth Peacock, *Maritime Folk Songs*, 47. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962).

that many of the songs sung to Greenleaf and Karpeles by their informants had been learned in the Victorian era; or if they had been learned later, they had been obtained from relatives who had first heard them before 1900.

The second reason is that we can check which songs collected by Greenleaf and Karpeles existed in England or Ireland during the Victorian era or earlier. Of course, it is possible that a few of the old songs imported from the British Isles to Newfoundland found their way across the Atlantic only in the first two decades of the twentieth century; but the percentage of these is likely to be small. It is therefore reasonable to make the assumption that if we can verify that a song existed in Georgian or Victorian England and was collected in Newfoundland during the 1920s, it was also likely to have been sung in Victorian Newfoundland. Most and perhaps all historiography consists of blending established facts with probabilistic judgments about how those facts are related; and in this regard reconstructing the history of Newfoundland folksong is no different. We can establish probabilities but rarely certainties.

Deciding which of the songs collected by Greenleaf, Doyle and Karpeles had indeed existed in Victorian Britain and then showing their close connections with their parents on the eastern side of the Atlantic is not an easy task. But I believe that in most cases, it can be done. However, it is necessary to make a distinction between English and Irish songs. We know that the vast majority of Newfoundlanders in the second half of the nineteenth century were of either Irish or English extraction. There were a handful of Scottish or Francophone communities, but these were in a small minority. This general picture was still true in the 1920s. Greenleaf and Karpeles each found that the majority of settlements they visited fell into one of three categories: (i) exclusively or predominantly Irish; (ii) exclusively or predominantly English; or (iii) a mixture of English and Irish. Greenleaf concluded that Newfoundland folksong owed "a great debt to the people of Irish descent...they have a genius for music and learn not only the Irish songs but any other lovely airs they hear, and they render them most sweetly. I am inclined to credit the Irish with a large share in keeping the Newfoundland folk-music so melodious."²⁰ Newfoundland's Irish heritage is well known, although it still requires further study. On the other hand, relatively little attention has been paid to its English cultural heritage, especially its musical heritage, which is usually neglected in comparison to Irish musical traditions.²¹ In this article I focus entirely on the legacy of English song in Newfoundland.

Thanks to the work of John Mannion²² and Gordon Handcock,²³ we know that a sizeable minority of immigrants to Newfoundland came from southern England, and in particular from the English West Country. The West Country comprises the counties of Dorset, Somerset and Devon, and the Duchy of Cornwall. In comparing the corpus of song collected in Newfoundland by Doyle, Greenleaf and Karpeles with the vernacular music of Victorian England, there are four avenues of inquiry open to us.

The first and most obvious is to examine those few song collections published during the nineteenth century that derive specifically from one or more regions in the West Country. The works of Davies Gilbert and William Sandys come to mind. Gilbert's *Some Ancient Christmas Carols with the Tunes to which they were formerly Sung in the West of England* contained not only twenty folk carols but also such traditional ballads as "The Three Sisters" and "The Three Knights" (aka "The Cruel Brother"), the Cavalier broadside "The King Shall Enjoy His Own Again" and music for folk dancing and ceremonial customs.²⁴ William Sandys, who in the 1840s was a prominent member of the first learned society to concern itself with vernacular song, the Percy Society, also published a book with a similar title, *Christmas*

²⁰ Greenleaf and Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs*, xxxii-xxxiii.

²¹ A refreshing exception to this generalization is provided by Terry McDonald, "Where Have All the (English) Folk Songs Gone? Newfoundland's Rejection of Its Dorset Inheritance," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 14: 2 (1999), 180-192. See also E. David Gregory, "Vernacular Song, Cultural Identity, and Nationalism in Newfoundland, 1920-1955," *History of Intellectual Culture*, 4:1 (2004): 1-22.

²² John J. Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974). John J. Mannion, ed., *The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography*. St. John's: Institute of Social & Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977.

²³ Gordon Handcock, *'So Longe as There Comes Noe Women': Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland*. (St. John's, Nfld: Breakwater, 1989).

²⁴ Davies Gilbert, ed., *Some Ancient Christmas Carols with the Tunes to which they were formerly Sung in the West of England*. Second edition (London: John Nichols & Son, 1823).

Carols, Ancient and Modern, including the Most Popular in the West of England.²⁵ Sandys had family connections with Cornwall and did most of his song collecting there. His next publication, *Specimens of Cornish Provincial Dialect*, contained a mixture of vernacular prose and verse, including several songs and ballads, such as "The Barley Mow," "John Dory" and "Trelawney."²⁶ Sandys' third collection, issued by the Percy Society, was titled *Festive Songs, principally of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, and was wider-ranging in its geographical coverage, although some West Country wassails and drinking songs were included.²⁷ Despite their undoubted value, these four publications were each quite limited in scope; and even taken together they hardly provide the comprehensive picture of West Country traditional song for which we are looking. They must therefore be supplemented with other sources.

A second approach to comparing English and Newfoundland songs is to look at the major song collections of a more general nature that were published during the Victorian period. There are many of them, although four stand head-and-shoulders above the rest. The pioneering work of early Victorian folksong collecting (although it lacked tunes) was James Henry Dixon's *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England*,²⁸ which was subsequently reissued in an expanded version, edited by Robert Bell.²⁹ William Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* was the first systematic attempt to provide a detailed chronological survey, with copious illustrations, of the history of English popular song from the Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century.³⁰ It has never been surpassed and remains a vast treasury of information, song texts and melodies. Francis James Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* was an equally systematic and comprehensive multi-volume compilation of all the extant texts of those narrative songs that Child deemed traditional or folk ballads.³¹ His canon of 305 ballad clusters remains a standard reference tool today. The British Museum's acquisition of one of the largest extant collections of broadside ballads made it possible for Frederick Furnivall's Ballad Society to issue *The Roxburghe Ballads*, a multi-volume project that took two decades to complete, under the editorship of first William Chappell and later Joseph W. Ebsworth.³² If a traditional song was printed before the mid-nineteenth century, there is a good chance (although by no means a certainty) that it will be found in one of these monuments to Victorian scholarship. Although Dixon in particular did include some items noted in the field, none of these four collections was based primarily on oral tradition. So they must be supplemented by collections that reflect actual singing traditions in various regions of the United Kingdom. Thus examining the work of Victorian field collectors is thus our third line of investigation.

There appears to have been little song collecting done from oral tradition in the West Country during the mid-Victorian period. In other regions of England, such as Lancashire, there was considerable activity, but the southwest appears to have lost out until the 1880s. Then it struck lucky. The colourful and controversial cleric, archaeologist and novelist, Sabine Baring-Gould, who is probably best known as the composer of the hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers," was a pioneer of the Late Victorian folksong revival; and he assembled a collection of approximately 600 songs and ballads in his "fair copy" manuscript book, usually known as the "Personal Copy."³³ His search was focused mainly on the county of Devon, although

²⁵ William Sandys, ed., *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern, including the Most Popular in the West of England*. (London: Richard Beckley, 1833).

²⁶ William Sandys, ed., *Specimens of Cornish Provincial Dialect...also a Selection of Songs and Other Pieces connected with Cornwall*. (London: John Russell Smith, 1846).

²⁷ William Sandys, ed. *Festive Songs, principally of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. (London: Percy Society, 1848).

²⁸ James Henry Dixon, ed., *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England*. (London: Percy Society, 1846).

²⁹ Robert Bell, ed., *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England*. London: Griffin, Bohn & Co., 1857).

³⁰ William Chappell, ed. *Popular Music of the Olden Time, a collection of Ancient Songs, Ballads and Dance Tunes, illustrative of the National Music of England*, 2 Vols. (London: Cramer, Beale & Chappell, 1858-9. Reprinted: New York: Dover, 1965).

³¹ Francis James Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 10 parts in 5 volumes. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1882-1898. Reprinted: New York: Dover, 1965).

³² William Chappell & Joseph W. Ebsworth, eds., *The Roxburghe Ballads*, 9 vols. (Hertford, England: The Ballad Society, 1869-1899).

³³ Sabine Baring-Gould, ed. "Personal Copy" [manuscript notebooks]. Microfiche at Plymouth Central Public Library, Plymouth, Devon, and at Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, London, U.K.

he did also note some songs in Cornwall. He published many of the items he had collected in two large songbooks, *Songs and Ballads of the West, a Collection made from the Mouths of the People*³⁴ and *A Garland of Country Songs: English Folk Songs with their Traditional Melodies*.³⁵ These he later supplemented with another multi-volume collection titled *English Minstrelsie*.³⁶ There are some pitfalls to avoid when using these printed collections, since Baring-Gould was not averse to "improving" or censoring the words to songs, or even occasionally writing new lyrics himself. Nonetheless, his publications were pioneering works, and we can check their contents against his own manuscript books, which are now accessible on microfiche.³⁷ The Baring-Gould collection is a major resource, perhaps the single most important Victorian collection of folksongs noted from oral tradition.

The fourth avenue of inquiry is to move a few years beyond the end of the Victorian era and to consider the discoveries made during the Edwardian phase of the first Folksong Revival. The figure primarily responsible for the rejuvenation of the Folk-Song Society was, of course, Cecil Sharp; and between 1904 and 1909, in conjunction with fellow-collector Charles Marson, he published the five volumes of *Folk Songs from Somerset*, a regional collection that surpassed even Baring-Gould's in size and quality.³⁸ Only a year after Sharp began crisscrossing Somerset in his search for folksongs, the county of Dorset began to attract similar scrutiny. Dorset is particularly important for our inquiry into the English roots of Newfoundland song. Of the four counties within the English West Country, Devon and Dorset provided the highest percentage of emigrants to Newfoundland; but Dorset was the only county from which emigration occurred on a county-wide basis, from many villages as well as from the larger towns and ports. Moreover, most of the emigrants from the adjacent counties of Hampshire and Somerset came from communities close to the border with Dorset. Like the link between Devon and Newfoundland, the Dorset-Newfoundland connection therefore needs to be explored in depth. It is significant, for example, that a higher proportion of emigrants from Dorset tended to settle in smaller outport communities, whereas emigrants from Devon were more likely to settle in St. John's. Both the south coast and northern Newfoundland were peopled mainly by men and women from Dorset.³⁹ The relationship between the English West Country and Newfoundland was, of course, fundamentally a commercial one, with the fishery of the Grand Banks at its core. However, there was also a strong cultural connection, since immigrants from Devon and Dorset brought with them the mores and the music of their predominantly rural counties of origin.

Collecting in Dorset was primarily the work of the Hammond brothers, Henry and Robert. The Hammond collection, which is located in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House (London), is not as well known as it should be, given its size and importance.⁴⁰ The brothers, who initially began collecting in Somerset, turned their attention to Dorset in the late summer of 1905. With Henry focusing on the tunes and Robert on the words, they noted 193 songs between August and October, including 53 from Robert Barrett of Piddletown; 40 from William Bartlett, a resident of the Wimborne workhouse; 21 from fisherman Joseph Elliott of Todber; and 19 from George Dowden of Lackington. Early the next year, they did some more collecting at Bath (Somerset) and Winchester (Hampshire) before returning to Dorset in March. For about a year, they toured the county on bicycles, collecting over 500

³⁴ Sabine Baring-Gould & H. Fleetwood Sheppard, eds., *Songs and Ballads of the West, a Collection made from the Mouths of the People*. Four vols. (London: Paley & Willis, 1889-91. Second edition, Methuen and Paley & Willis, 1895).

³⁵ Sabine Baring-Gould & H. Fleetwood Sheppard, eds., *A Garland of Country Songs: English Folk songs with their Traditional Melodies*. (London: Methuen, 1895).

³⁶ Sabine Baring-Gould, ed., *English Minstrelsie: A National Monument of English Song*, 8 Vols. (Edinburgh: Jack, Grange, 1895-98).

³⁷ Baring-Gould Collection. Devon County Records Office, Exeter, Devon, and Killerton House, Devon, U.K. On microfiche at Plymouth Central Public Library, Plymouth, Devon, and at Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, London, U.K.

³⁸ Cecil J. Sharp & Charles L. Marson, eds. *Folk Songs from Somerset*. Five vols. (Taunton: The Wessex Press, 1904-1909. Reprinted: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1904-11).

³⁹ Handcock, 'So longe as there comes noe women': 146-152.

⁴⁰ Hammond Manuscript Collection. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, Camden Town, London, U.K.

items, including a large batch of songs and ballads from Mrs. Marina Russell of Upwey. After a break of six months, they made two more short trips to Dorset in the late summer and early winter of 1907, collecting another 57 songs. Altogether the Hammonds noted a total of 918 items: 648 tunes (of which some 200 were variants), plus 270 texts without tunes. Of these, they submitted a total of 412 songs (i.e., both tunes and texts) to the Folk-Song Society.⁴¹ Forty of these items were printed in a contribution by Henry Hammond to No. 11 of the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* in 1907.⁴² It was a small, although fairly representative sample and suggested the value of the brothers' work. Yet half a century would pass before a larger percentage of the Hammond manuscript collection became available to the public, through the work of editors James Reeves⁴³ and Frank Purslow.⁴⁴ In total, some 235 songs or variants have now been published, although they are scattered among seven different publications. Moreover, Steve Roud has indexed the entire Hammond manuscript collection in his impressive folksong database.⁴⁵

To sum up, in order to verify the Victorian provenance of the songs collected in Newfoundland by Doyle, Greenleaf and Karpeles, we may reasonably check them against the publications or manuscript collections of the following Victorian collectors: Davies Gilbert, William Sandys, James Henry Dixon, Robert Bell, William Chappell, Francis James Child and Sabine Baring-Gould. We also have at our disposal numerous collections of broadside ballads, of which the Roxburghe and the Pepys⁴⁶ are the largest to have been reprinted, while the Madden and Euing collections are also fairly accessible. Because it has been indexed by Roud, the Madden Collection is particularly useful, and Roud's database also includes the Baring-Gould broadside collection.⁴⁷ Whether or not a particular song can be traced to the Victorian era, it is also useful to see if it was found during the first decade of the twentieth century by one or both of the two Edwardian collectors who specialized in noting tunes and texts from oral tradition in Somerset and Dorset, namely Cecil Sharp and Henry Hammond. It is, however, one thing to say that this comparative research can be done and quite another to actually do all the work involved, notwithstanding the invaluable help provided by Roud. Nonetheless, a variety of examples may illustrate the potential fruitfulness of this line of inquiry.

Every ballad in the Child canon necessarily dates from the Victorian era, or in most cases, from previous centuries, since *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* was published in ten instalments between 1883 and 1898, and its industrious editor included every known variant text of the privileged 305 items. Greenleaf collected 19 Child ballads in Newfoundland, and Karpeles collected 24. There was considerable overlap, but the combined total comes to 31. Two of the traditional ballads that both Greenleaf and Karpeles located in Newfoundland were Child # 78, "The Unquiet Grave" (aka "Cold Blows the Wind") and Child # 100, "Willie o' Winsbury." They may serve as our first two case studies.

While it is quite possible that "The Unquiet Grave" dates back to an incident during the Wars of the Roses, the earliest version we have is that collected by Peter Buchan in Scotland, presumably in the 1820s. The diction of Buchan's version suggests that it may have derived from a Scottish broadside; moreover, the Baring-Gould broadside collection proves that the ballad was available as a stall sheet in southern England during the late Victorian period.⁴⁸ It was also collected from oral tradition on several occasions in the south and west of England during the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1868, for example, Charlotte Latham sent *The Folk-Lore Record* a version that she had noted from a girl in Sussex;

⁴¹ Frank Purslow, "The Hammond Brothers' Folk Song Collection", *Folk Music Journal*, I: 4 (1968): 236-266. EFDSS reprint, 1-32.

⁴² H.E.D. Hammond, "Songs Collected in Dorset", *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, III: 11 (1907): 59-136.

⁴³ James Reeves, ed., *The Everlasting Circle*. (London: Heinemann, 1960).

⁴⁴ Frank Purslow edited four songbooks drawn from the Hammond and Gardiner manuscripts housed at Cecil Sharp House. Frank Purslow, ed., *Marrow Bones: English Folk Songs from the Hammond and Gardiner Mss.* London: English Folk Dance & Song Society, 1965. *The Wanton Seed: More English Folk Songs from the Hammond & Gardiner Mss.* London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, [1968]. *The Constant Lovers: More English Folk Songs from the Hammond & Gardiner Mss.* London: English Folk Dance & Song Society, 1972. *The Foggy Dew: More English Folk Songs from the Hammond & Gardiner Mss.* London: English Folk Dance & Song Society, 1974.

⁴⁵ Steve Roud, *Folk Song Index*. (Maresfield, Sussex: Roud, 2003).

⁴⁶ W. G. Day, ed., *The Pepys Ballads*, 5 Vols. (Cambridge, England: Brewer, 1987).

⁴⁷ Steve Roud, *Broadside Index*. (Maresfield, Sussex: Roud, 2003).

⁴⁸ Roud, *Broadside Index*. The Baring-Gould broadside collection is housed in the British Library.

in 1877, the *Ipswich Journal* then published an East Anglian version; later, Frances Hindes Groome collected the ballad from an old gypsy woman in 1880; and finally, Charlotte Burne included Shropshire singer Jane Butler's variant in her book *Shropshire Folk-Lore* (1883-86).⁴⁹ Evidence that the ballad was known in the West Country is provided by Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England* (first series, 1865), which recorded a Cornish version from the parish of Cury;⁵⁰ and the case is clinched by two versions collected by the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould in Devon. One of these, actually noted by Mrs. Gibbons from her nurse, Elizabeth Doidge of Brentor, Devon, was dated by the informant to 1828; while the second was noted by Baring-Gould himself on two different occasions during the 1880s, from Devonian informants John Woodrich of Thrustleton and Anne Roberts of Scobbeter.⁵¹ Lucy Broadwood also collected the ballad in North Devon, while visiting Baring-Gould in 1893, from a singer named Mrs. Jeffreys.⁵² At the beginning of the Edwardian era, Cecil Sharp found "The Unquiet Grave" three times in Somerset during 1904, noting it from Mrs. Ree of Hambridge and from two of his most prolific informants, Lucy White of Hambridge and Emma Overd of Langport.⁵³ Percy Merrick collected it in Sussex,⁵⁴ and the Hammonds also found it seven times during the next three years, twice in Somerset in 1905 (from Mrs. Gulliver of Combe Florey and William Poole of Taunton) and five times in Dorset during 1906-07. Those informants were Mrs. R. Gale of Powerstock, Henry Way of Bridport, Mrs. Jane Hann of Stoke Abbott, Frank Stockley of Wareham (all in 1906) and Mrs. Marina Russell of Upwey (in early 1907).⁵⁵

On the other side of the Atlantic, both Greenleaf and Karpeles found the "The Unquiet Grave" ballad in oral tradition in Newfoundland. On 1 October 1929, Karpeles noted it from the singing of Mrs. Maggie Day in the northern coastal community of Fortune Harbour;⁵⁶ while earlier that same year Greenleaf had collected it from Mrs. Rosie White in the outport of Sandy Cove, on the west side of the island.⁵⁷ The provenance of "The Unquiet Grave" thus suggests a general cultural connection between Newfoundland and southern and western England and at least the possibility of a specific connection with Dorset. It therefore appears likely that the ballad was being sung in both West Country villages and Newfoundland outports during the second half of the Victorian era.

Child's title for the cluster of texts that he called "Willie o' Winsbury" derived from the Scottish variant that he assumed to be closest to the original "popular" ballad. He located nine different versions, most of which named the protagonist either William or Thomas and had him originating from Winesberry or Winchberrie or some similarly named place in Scotland. However, the earliest known English variant was collected in Kent in 1775 by the Rev. P. Parsons; and the protagonist is not a disguised Scottish nobleman who becomes the lover of the daughter of the King of France, but a sailor named Johnny Barbary who seduces a rich merchant's daughter.⁵⁸ A Victorian version published in England in 1877 and apparently collected by B. Montgomerie Ranking from a West Country fisherman some years before, names the hero as Johnnie Barbour.⁵⁹ Surprisingly, Baring-Gould never came across the ballad in Devon or Cornwall; but during the Edwardian era, it was subsequently collected from oral tradition in several other counties of southern England. Cecil Sharp, for example, noted it from four different Somerset informants (Jack Barnard and Mr. Gordge, both of Bridgwater, William Bailey of Cannington, and Mrs. Sage of Chew Stoke); and in two instances, the protagonist was identified not by name but as a "jack tar."⁶⁰ The Hammond brothers collected a version from William Bartlett at Wimborne, Dorset, in September 1905. In Bartlett's version, the father is a merchant with ships at sea, but the lover is an apprentice called Tom the

⁴⁹ Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, II, 236-237 & III, 512-513.

⁵⁰ Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, III, 513.

⁵¹ Baring-Gould, "Personal Copy", I, 20, item # 6. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, IV, 474-475.

⁵² Lucy Broadwood, ed. *English Traditional Songs and Carols*, 54-55. (London: Boosey, 1908).

⁵³ Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*, I, 83-85.

⁵⁴ Percy Merrick, *Folk Songs from Sussex*, 198. (London: Novello, 1912); volume 5 of Cecil Sharp, general ed., *English County Folk Songs*, 5 Vols. (London: Novello, 1908-1912).

⁵⁵ *Hammond MSS Collection*, No. S36, No. S66, No. D446, No. D449, No. D483, No. D 668, & No. D816.

⁵⁶ Karpeles, *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*, 58-59.

⁵⁷ Greenleaf & Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs*, 23-24.

⁵⁸ Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, II, 401.

⁵⁹ B. Montgomerie Ranking, communication to *Notes and Queries*, Fifth Series, VII (1877): 387.

⁶⁰ Maud Karpeles, ed., *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*, I: 212-125. 2 Vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Barber.⁶¹ Moving across the Atlantic, we find Elisabeth Greenleaf first collecting the ballad from Maude Roberts in Sally's Cove in 1920, and the hero is a sailor named Young Barbour. Nine years later, she collected it again from Peter Abbott at Twillingate, and this time the sailor's name was John Barbour.⁶² Maud Karpeles noted fragments of the ballad on numerous occasions but obtained only two full versions. In the first, obtained in 1929 from Florrie Snow of North River, the lover is a sailor named Willie, but in the second, noted in 1930 from Janie Augot at Rencontre, the sailor is called Young Barber.⁶³ In this variant, as in the Dorset version, the hero proudly announces in the last stanza that for each guinea of dowry supplied by the merchant, he possesses thirty-three. We have here, I suggest, proof of a Dorset / Newfoundland cultural connection, and *prima facie* evidence that Child # 100 was sung in Victorian Newfoundland.

Broadside ballads were another type of narrative song likely to have served to while away long winter evenings in Newfoundland outports populated by settlers from the English West Country. "Bold Johnson, or the Three Butchers" (Laws L4) is a typical broadside ballad. It is mildly lurid—a naked woman is found pinned to the ground by her hair—and serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of being a good Samaritan. Elisabeth Greenleaf collected it twice in Newfoundland, once as "The Jolly Butchermen" from Will White of Sandy Cove, and once as "Johnson, or, The Three Riders" from Dennis and Michael Walsh at Fleur de Lys.⁶⁴ Karpeles also noted it twice, from Irene Barrett of Harbour Grace, and from Myrtle Parsons at Hermitage.⁶⁵ These locations are widely dispersed: Sandy Cove is on the Strait of Belle Isle, Fleur de Lys is on the northern shore, Hermitage is on the south coast, and Harbour Grace is on Conception Bay at the eastern end of the island. So it seems likely that the ballad was known all over "the Rock." It was also very common in nineteenth-century England, with Catnach, Pitts and Such among the many broadside printers who kept it in their catalogues. One of William Chappell's friends in the Percy Society, James Orchard Halliwell, picked up a copy, which found its way into the Euing Collection. Frederick Madden obtained several versions (for the British Museum and for his own extensive broadside collection).⁶⁶ Sabine Baring-Gould not only possessed a broadsheet of the ballad but also collected it from oral tradition, his source singer being John Bennett, a labourer who lived in Chagford, on the northern edge of Dartmoor.⁶⁷ Sharp collected it on eight different occasions, including three times in Somerset, the first from Tom Symes at Bredon Puckington in September 1903.⁶⁸ The Hammonds also found it prevalent in both Somerset and Dorset, first collecting it from Robert Barrett of Piddleton in the fall of 1905.⁶⁹ Other informants included Mrs. Cousins of Bath (Somerset), Mrs. Farnham of South Perrot, and Joseph Vincent of Wareham (both Dorset);⁷⁰ but the brothers noted their best text in November 1906, from Frank Stockley, who also lived in Wareham.⁷¹ Because this broadside was so common, we cannot be sure that the version or versions imported into Newfoundland came from the West Country rather than from London or another English seaport such as Bristol or Portsmouth. Nonetheless, the provenance of this ballad in Somerset, Dorset and Devon does strongly suggest a West Country/Newfoundland cultural connection.

There is an abundance of evidence to show that the cross-dressing ballad "Polly Oliver" (Laws N14) was similarly a very popular broadside in nineteenth-century England. It has been suggested that the song dates back to the reign of Charles II; but we know for sure that it was extant in 1837, when it was included in the manuscript list of "Collard's Ballads," an item in the Madden Collection. Madden picked up a stall copy sometime during the mid-Victorian era, and later in the century Baring-Gould purchased two

⁶¹ H. E. D. Hammond, "Songs Collected in Dorset", *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, III: 11 (1907), 72-73. Also printed in Reeves, *Everlasting Circle*, 278-279.

⁶² Greenleaf & Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs*, 28-33.

⁶³ Karpeles, *Folksongs from Newfoundland* (1971), 73-76.

⁶⁴ Greenleaf & Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs*, 82-86.

⁶⁵ Karpeles, *Folksongs from Newfoundland* (1971), 132-135.

⁶⁶ Roud, *Broadside Index*.

⁶⁷ Sabine Baring-Gould, "The Personal Copy" [manuscript notebooks], II, item 177. Microfiche at Plymouth Central Public Library, Plymouth, Devon.

⁶⁸ Karpeles, *Sharp's Collection*, I, 274-279.

⁶⁹ *Hammond MSS Collection*, D267.

⁷⁰ *Hammond MSS Collection*, S288, D561 & D653.

⁷¹ *Hammond MSS Collection*, D666. Also Purslow, *Marrow Bones*, 89.

broadsheet versions.⁷² He included the song, albeit with rewritten words, in the seventh volume of his *English Minstrelsie*.⁷³ William Chappell seems to have been the first Victorian scholar to include the ballad in a published collection of vernacular songs: it appeared in the second volume of *Popular Music of the Olden Time*.⁷⁴ The first field collector to note it from oral tradition in the West of England appears to have been Baring-Gould, who claimed in the late 1890s that he had heard "several variants sung to me in Devon and Cornwall," and printed part of a version taken down from "an old bedridden woman," although he coyly omitted "three or four not very delicate verses."⁷⁵ The song is listed (as "Polly Oliver's Rambles") in Baring-Gould's "Plymouth Fair Copy Manuscript" of 1892,⁷⁶ and also in the Killerton manuscript usually referred to as the "Personal Copy."⁷⁷ The song was evidently as common in Somerset as in Devon. Cecil Sharp first heard it sung in Hambridge by Lucy White on 5 August 1904. He collected it more times in different Somerset locations during the next two years, from informants Betsy Prince, Elizabeth Loveless, and Jack Barnett.⁷⁸ Significantly, the ballad was also found in oral tradition in Dorset by the Hammond brothers, who noted it in June 1906 from the singing of Sam Gregory of Beaminster.⁷⁹ The first Canadian discovery of the ballad was seemingly made by Roy Mackenzie; he noted it from Mrs. James Campbell of River John, Nova Scotia, and included it in *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*.⁸⁰ Evidence that it was extant in Newfoundland in 1929 is provided by Greenleaf and Mansfield, who noted it twice, from Tom and Will White in Sandy Cove, and from Gordon Willis on the island of Fogo.⁸¹ As with "The Three Butchers," this broadside ballad was so common that it is impossible to prove that it was imported into Newfoundland from a particular region of England; but we can say with assurance that it was popular in the West Country during the nineteenth century and that the forebears of the Newfoundlanders who sang it in the 1920s had most likely emigrated from that part of the United Kingdom during the Victorian era or earlier.

My fifth and last example of a ballad found in both Dorset and Newfoundland is the putative record of an amorous encounter between a sailor and a musical lady, "Just as the Tide Was Flowing." Perhaps surprisingly, Greenleaf found it to be quite common in the northern and western outports she visited in 1929, although in Newfoundland it seems to have been known as "Down Where the Tide Was Flowing." She noted three variants, from Harvey Freeman at Twillingate, from Patrick Mooney at Fortune Harbour, and from one of her more prolific informants, Mrs. J. C. Roberts of Sally's Cove.⁸² In England, the ballad was extant in oral tradition in Devon, Dorset, Somerset and elsewhere; but it also circulated as a broadside. Its existence in both Madden and Lucy Broadwood broadside collections is sufficient to prove that it dates back to the Victorian era.⁸³ Moreover, a variant turns up in the "Personal Copy," although without details of when, where and from whom Baring-Gould collected it.⁸⁴ During the early Edwardian period, Sharp found it in oral tradition in Somerset, noting it from Harry Richards at Curry Rivel in 1904,⁸⁵ and the Hammonds found it in the same county the next year, collecting it from Mrs. Gulliver of Combe Florey.⁸⁶ In July 1906, they also located it in Dorset, sung by Walter Diment of Cheddington.⁸⁷ In this case, the ballad was not so common as a broadside, and it is just possible that the link between the English West Country and Newfoundland was one of oral transmission among sailors, perhaps because of its subject matter. However, since broadsheet copies are known to have existed, it is equally feasible that print versions circulated in Newfoundland outports during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

⁷² Roud, *Broadside Index*.

⁷³ Sabine Baring-Gould, *English Minstrelsie*, VII, 81-83. (Edinburgh: Jack, Grange, 1898).

⁷⁴ William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, II, 676. (London: Cramer, Beale & Chappell, 1859).

⁷⁵ Baring-Gould, *English Minstrelsie*, VII, xxi.

⁷⁶ Baring-Gould, "Plymouth Fair-Copy Manuscript," No. 161.

⁷⁷ Baring-Gould, "Personal Copy," 2: 85, No. 154.

⁷⁸ Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*, II, 77-79.

⁷⁹ Hammond MSS Collection, D526. Also Purslow, *Foggy Dew*, 69-70.

⁸⁰ Roy W. Mackenzie, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*, 151. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928).

⁸¹ Greenleaf & Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs*, 51-54.

⁸² Greenleaf & Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs*, 135.

⁸³ Roud, *Broadside Index*.

⁸⁴ Baring-Gould, "Personal Copy," 3: 121, No. 464.

⁸⁵ Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*, II, 558-559.

⁸⁶ Hammond MSS Collection, S27.

⁸⁷ Hammond MSS Collection, D570.

The dividing line between ballads and folk lyrics is often hard to draw, but I will now turn to a small but reasonably representative selection of non-narrative songs that likely enjoyed quite widespread currency in both the English West Country and Newfoundland in the late Victorian era. Many of the thousands of folksongs on the subject of love depict seductions, and many others are laments expressing sadness at the loss of the loved one. "The Nightingale" (aka "The Nightingales Sing") is a song with a memorable tune that combines both themes. Employing the metaphor of a performance on the fiddle, it portrays a joyous sexual encounter between a soldier and a girl, followed by the man's explanation of why marriage is not on the cards. Karpeles collected the song twice in Newfoundland, from Florrie Snow at North River, Conception Bay, in October 1929, and then from John Parsons at Hermitage, on the southern coast of the island, in July 1930.⁸⁸ So where had it come from? My first thought was that it must be the same as the "Sweet Nightingale" in Robert Bell's expanded edition of Dixon's *Ancient Ballads, Poems and Songs of the Peasantry of England*: but in fact, that is a different song, albeit the same one that Baring-Gould and Sharp included in the 1905 edition of *Songs and Ballads of the West*. In this case, we seem to draw a blank with each of the major Victorian collections: neither Dixon, Bell, Chappell nor Child provide any clues, and even Baring-Gould leads us down a blind alley. The Madden collection, however, establishes that there was a nineteenth-century broadside version of the song (Laws P14), so we can with assurance date it back to the Victorian era.⁸⁹ In the early Edwardian period, Sharp noted it on six occasions from oral tradition in Somerset, although the song sometimes had the alternative title "The Bold Grenadier." He first collected it in August 1904 from Mrs. Trott of Langport, although his most complete text seems to have been provided by Jim Proll of Monksilver in September 1906.⁹⁰ The Hammonds noted it twice in Dorset: from William Bartlett of Wimborne in 1905, and from Mrs. Lillington of Wareham the next year.⁹¹ Once again, a link between West Country and Newfoundland oral tradition seems probable, although transmission by broadsheet cannot be ruled out.

Another distinctive—and beautiful—lament on the theme of enforced separation that Karpeles discovered in Newfoundland in 1930 was called "The Dreams of Lovely Nancy" by her informants.⁹² Since the singers' names were Mrs. James Joe Doyle and Mrs. Maurice Flynn, one might reasonably suspect that this song had been inherited from Irish oral tradition. That possibility cannot be ruled out, but the Placentia region has many communities of mixed English and Irish background, and women with husbands of Irish ancestry might themselves come from West Country stock. The Newfoundland love song is clearly a variant of a lament that Baring-Gould collected in Devon on four occasions (three of them in 1889) and printed in *Songs and Ballads of the West* (1895).⁹³ He had renamed it "The Streams of Nantsian" on the grounds that "Nancy" was a corruption of the Cornish word for valley ("nance" or "nantsian").⁹⁴ However, the "Plymouth Fair Copy Manuscript" reveals that four of the five versions of the song that he collected before 1893 were called "The Streams of Lovely Nancy," which indicates that most of his singers, who included Mathew Baker of Lew Trenchard, Devon, Matthew Ford of Menheniot, Cornwall, and James Olver of Launceston, Cornwall, knew it by that title. Baring-Gould recorded that another informant, a Mr. Templer (his given name is indecipherable), had learned the song in 1834.⁹⁵ Baring-Gould also commented in his song-notes in *Songs and Ballads of the West* that a version had been printed by a local broadsheet publisher, Keys of Devonport (a coastal community adjacent to Plymouth), in about 1830.⁹⁶ Further evidence that the song dates back to the Victorian period is provided by a variant titled "Faithful Emma," collected by Heywood Sumner in Sussex and included by Lucy Broadwood and Alex Fuller-Maitland in their 1893 publication, *English County Songs*.⁹⁷ Lucy Broadwood subsequently linked another variant ("Come All You Little Streamers") with southern Cornwall by pointing out the internal

⁸⁸ Karpeles, *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*, 232-233.

⁸⁹ Roud, *Broadside Index*.

⁹⁰ Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*, I: 645-649.

⁹¹ *Hammond MSS Collection*, D138 (Bartlett) & D678 (Lillington).

⁹² Karpeles, *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*, 205-207.

⁹³ Baring-Gould, *Songs and Ballads of the West*, 198-199.

⁹⁴ Baring-Gould, *Songs and Ballads of the West*, xi.

⁹⁵ Baring-Gould, "Plymouth Fair Copy Manuscript", No. 93.

⁹⁶ Baring-Gould, *Songs and Ballads of the West*, xi.

⁹⁷ Lucy Broadwood & J. A. Fuller-Maitland, *English County Songs*, 136-137. (London: Leadenhall Press, 1893).

reference to children employed in tin mining.⁹⁸ In the Edwardian period, Sharp collected "The Streams of Lovely Nancy" three times in Somerset between 1905 and 1908, from singers William Stokes, Mr. Turner, and Jack Barnard.⁹⁹ The Hammonds noted it twice in Dorset: in September 1905 from George Dowden of Lackington, and in December 1906 from Robert White of Dorchester.¹⁰⁰ It would therefore seem certain that the song either had its origins in the West of England or at the very least developed a close affinity with the region. Yet since we cannot prove that Mrs. Doyle's or Mrs. Flynn's ancestors emigrated from the West of England, a direct connection between "The Dreams of Lovely Nancy" and the West Country version of "The Streams of Lovely Nancy" remains somewhat speculative. It is possible that the song traveled to Newfoundland by way of Ireland. Nonetheless, given the shared verses, a link of some kind appears more than plausible.

In the thirty-six years I have lived in Canada, I have never heard a cuckoo, and my Newfoundland students assure me that they do not exist on "the Rock." Nonetheless Karpeles collected "The Cuckoo" from Joseph C. Jackman at Grole, on Hermitage Bay, on July 23 1930.¹⁰¹ This section of the southern coast of Newfoundland was settled primarily by English immigrants, so the West Country connection again seems possible. But can we be sure that "The Cuckoo" was a song beloved of Victorians? The answer seems to be in the affirmative. The manuscript list of "Collard's Ballads" establishes the date of the song as pre-1837,¹⁰² although the earliest trace of it that I have been able to locate in a published collection is a single verse in James Orchard Halliwell's *Nursery Rhymes of England*.¹⁰³ However, there was a Catnach broadside of "The Cuckoo," and a broadsheet version is to be found in the Madden Collection.¹⁰⁴ Baring-Gould collected the lyric in Devon on 8 November 1892, from Robert Hard and Mary Longworthy at Stoke Fleming,¹⁰⁵ and two versions were included in his *A Garland of Country Song*.¹⁰⁶ Towards the end of the century, William Alexander Barrett printed a version in his *English Folk Songs*.¹⁰⁷ In the Edwardian period, Sharp found six versions in Somerset, the earliest of which he noted from Mrs. Lizzie Welch of Hambridge in April 1904. The Hammonds also located one version in that county, at Combe Florey, where Mrs. Gulliver lived.¹⁰⁸ When the brothers moved on to Dorset, they found the song frequently, noting it from five informants: William Bartlett of Wimborne (August 1905), Mrs. Gale of Powerstock (May 1906), Mrs. Young of Long Barton (July 1906), Mrs. Notley of Higher Woodsford (January 1907), and Mrs. Bishop of Mardon Newton (February 1907).¹⁰⁹ So while we cannot prove that the song traveled across the Atlantic to the southern coast of Newfoundland before the beginning of the twentieth century, this is another instance where we know it was well known in Victorian England and also where the Devon, Somerset and Dorset connections appear strong. It is therefore likely that "The Cuckoo" was sung in the Hermitage Bay outposts as well as in West Country villages during the latter part of Queen Victoria's reign.

The sea song "Spanish Ladies" was sometimes used as a shanty, and it has a distinctive tune, a good example of what Frank Kidson called a "vital melody."¹¹⁰ Evidence that the song was well known in the early years of Victoria's reign is provided by James Henry Dixon, who printed the words in *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England*, published in 1846.¹¹¹ He commented that "This song is ancient, but we have no means of ascertaining at what period it was written...It is a general

⁹⁸ Lucy Broadwood, commentary on two variants of "Come All You Little Streamers" submitted by George Butterworth and Annie Gilchrist, in *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, IV: 17, 310-316.

⁹⁹ Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*, II, 533-536.

¹⁰⁰ *Hammond MSS Collection*, D205 (Dowden) & D725 (White).

¹⁰¹ Karpeles, *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*, 245.

¹⁰² Roud, *Broadside Index*.

¹⁰³ James Orchard Halliwell, *The Nursery Rhymes of England*. (London: Percy Society, 1847. Revised edition, London: The Bodley Head, 1870). The latter edition is cited in Roud, *Folk Song Index*, but without a page number.

¹⁰⁴ Roud, *Broadside Index*.

¹⁰⁵ Baring-Gould, "Personal Copy", II: 336, No. 307; published in Reeves, *Everlasting Circle*, 79.

¹⁰⁶ Baring-Gould, *A Garland of Country Song*, 4-5. (London: Methuen, 1895).

¹⁰⁷ William Alexander Barrett, *English Folk Songs*, 81. (London: Novello, Ewer & Co., [1891]).

¹⁰⁸ *Hammond MSS Collection*, S33 (Gulliver).

¹⁰⁹ *Hammond MSS Collection*, D164 (Bartlett), D440 (Gale), D606 (Young), D744 (Notley) & D839 (Bishop).

¹¹⁰ Frank Kidson, "The Vitality of Melody," *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 34 (1907-08), 81-95.

¹¹¹ James Henry Dixon, ed., *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England*, 235-236. (London: Percy Society, 1846).

favourite. The air is plaintive, and in the minor key.”¹¹² But Dixon failed to print the tune, and it was left to William Chappell to do so in the second volume of *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, which was published in 1859. He obtained it from several sources. One was fellow collector William Sandys, who had noted it from a septuagenarian informant, J. C. Schetky, probably in Cornwall. Another was antiquarian F. Durrant Cooper, who heard it from a retired sailor at Corson Bay in Devon.¹¹³ The chorus in the English version runs as follows:

We'll range and we'll rove like true British sailors,
We'll range and we'll rove all on the salt seas,
Until we strike soundings in the channel of England,
From Ushant to Scilly is thirty-five leagues.¹¹⁴

“Spanish Ladies” evidently remained in oral tradition among seafarers throughout the remaining decades of the nineteenth century, and it was still being sung in West Country ports during the Edwardian era. Cecil Sharp collected a version from former mariner Captain Lewis in Minehead, Somerset, on 1 April 1906. The previous August, he had also noted it from James Bale of Bridgwater.¹¹⁵ It is significant that the two versions collected by the Hammonds (from Mr. Felt in October 1906, and from J. Dowell in January 1907) were found in the Dorset ports most heavily engaged in trade with St. John's and fishing off the Grand Banks, namely Poole and Weymouth.¹¹⁶ When Maud Karpeles heard James Day sing the shanty at Fortune Harbour, Newfoundland, in 1929, it was clearly the same song, although the chorus had been modified to:

We'll rant and we'll roar like true British sailors,
We'll rant and we'll roar across the salt seas,
Until we strike soundage in the Channel of old England,
From England to Sweden is ninety-five leagues.¹¹⁷

A few years earlier, Gerald S. Doyle had collected the words of a Newfoundland version of the song, and ascribed authorship to a St. John's customs officer named H. W. LeMesurier, who was alleged to have written the new lyrics as long ago as 1880.¹¹⁸ Elisabeth Greenleaf noted the song from LeMesurier himself, and also from Tom White of Sandy Cove. The tune was the same “vital melody” as that collected by Chappell, Sharp, and Karpeles, but LeMesurier's version had the following chorus:

We'll rant and we'll roar like true Newfoundlanders,
We'll rant and we'll roar on deck and below,
Until we see bottom inside the two sunkers,
When straight through the channel to Toslow we'll go.¹¹⁹

From an *aide mémoire* for navigation in the English Channel “Spanish Ladies” had evolved into a fisherman's celebration of the girls in the outports of Placentia Bay; and instead of genial affection for the old country, there was now a sense of pride in Newfoundland. But it is clear that “The Ryans and the Pittmans,” as LeMesurier named his rewrite, had its roots in “Spanish Ladies,” and that both versions were almost certainly sung in late Victorian Newfoundland.

I could multiply comparisons between songs collected in England and variants found on “the Rock” in the 1920s; but these nine examples should serve to demonstrate that there *is* substantial indirect evidence to suggest that many of the items collected by Greenleaf, Doyle and Karpeles were in fact old

¹¹² Dixon, *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs*: 235.

¹¹³ Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, II: 736.

¹¹⁴ Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, II: 737.

¹¹⁵ Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp's Collection*, II: 288-289.

¹¹⁶ *Hammond MSS Collection*, D634 (Felt, Poole) & D745 (Dowell, Weymouth).

¹¹⁷ Karpeles, *Folksongs from Newfoundland* (1971): 155-156.

¹¹⁸ Doyle, *Old-Time Songs and Poetry* (1927), unpaginated.

¹¹⁹ Greenleaf & Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs*: 266-267.

songs or derivatives of old songs from Victorian or perhaps Georgian England. In some instances, we can do no more than show that the English song is old enough to have traveled across the Atlantic Ocean before the end of the nineteenth century. In other cases, it is possible to demonstrate that the English West Country was the most likely source of a song collected in Newfoundland. A close reading of the text of "Willie o' Winsbury," for example, proves the close link between Dorset and Newfoundland versions of the ballad. Occasionally, we can prove that the song had reached Newfoundland before the end of the Victorian era. Thus, in our last example, "Spanish Ladies," the original text has undergone substantial alteration; but the tune reveals the English roots of a well-known Newfoundland song, and we have the evidence to date the Newfoundland variant back to the late nineteenth century. Most often the presumed mode of transmission is oral, either from sailor to sailor or as a by-product of a singer or singers' emigration from Devon, Dorset or Somerset. Occasionally, however, print is an equally likely method of transmission from the Old World to the New. This is true, for instance, of the broadside ballads "The Three Butchers" and "Polly Oliver." It seems likely that such broadside ballads were a staple of popular song in nineteenth-century Newfoundland, just as they were among the English lower classes. In short, a West Country/Newfoundland connection is plausible in all our test cases; but the degree of probability varies from fair to very high. In all nine instances, the songs collected in Newfoundland clearly have roots in the British Isles.

Using this methodology, it should therefore be possible to reconstruct some aspects of the musical culture of the Newfoundland outports during the nineteenth century. Obviously, until we follow up the antecedents of each of the items collected by Greenleaf, Karpeles and Doyle, we will not know exactly how many of the songs they noted were Newfoundland in origin, how many derived from Ireland, and how many had their roots in Victorian, Georgian or even seventeenth-century England. Doyle, of course, concentrated on material he believed to have been created by Newfoundlanders; but a significant number of his songs have already revealed their English or Irish origins. A preliminary estimate would suggest that at least three-quarters of Greenleaf's ballads and sea songs have transatlantic roots, although many of those may prove to derive from Ireland. My hunch, moreover, is that a good ninety percent of Karpeles' texts and tunes had either Irish or United Kingdom sources, with the latter predominating. Her collecting in 1930 on the southern coast of Newfoundland reveals not only an English musical heritage but a particular link with the West Country, and even, in a few instances, a specific connection with Dorset. Hence we may safely conclude that, at least in terms of popular song, certain nineteenth-century Newfoundland outports, especially those on the south coast, did indeed share a common culture with Victorian England.

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